BIRD CALENDAR - 1929 – 25th YEAR

Bulletin No. 2 April 1 - May 5

WHY THE NUMBER OF MIGRATORY BIRDS IN OUR PARKS IS DECREASING.

The continuously changeable, rainy weather has resulted in one of the longest springs for Cleveland on record. Things have been showing green gradually since the last days of March, and the forest trees are still by no means in full leaf on this the 20th day of May. Oaks and chestnuts and elms and a few other trees – especially if away from the tempering influence of Lake Erie – have their leaves still in the infantile, curled, colorful, most beautiful stages of their recurring annual development. There have been as yet no days so warm and summer-like as April 6-7.

The changeable, delayed, lingering spring weather seems to have affected bird migration considerably. If the warm weather of early April had prevailed for a week or ten days, Myrtle and Yellow Warblers and Orioles might possible have arrived in the vicinity of Cleveland in time to feed on and enjoy the unusually rich and luxurious crop of cherry, pear and apple blossoms. As it was, however, none of these fruit tree haunting birds came until almost the end of blossom time, and these familiar spring visitors, did not, therefore, stop with us in such large numbers, perhaps, or linger with us so long as they might have done if they could have caught the fruit trees in full bloom. There has been, on the other hand, no decrease this year in the numbers of many other species, of our annual bird visitors. In Wade Park for example, there have never been more Flickers and Grackles and Mourning Doves and Sapsuckers and Red-headed Woodpeckers and Song Sparrows and White-throated Sparrows observed in any single spring than this, in spite of the presence there of more English Sparrows and Starlings than ever before. But the presence of so many hollow tree nesters at one time in our city parks has strongly emphasized the short-sighted policy of the city park management in cutting down the large dead and dead-topped trees, in the holes of which these birds naturally, instinctively, build their nests. If the park forester would only leave the dead trees standing until they fell naturally, how much happier the birds and their lovers would be. If moreover, the city park management could only be persuaded to discharge about two-thirds of the men from the payroll who spend such a large portion of their time clearing away the undergrowth and underbrush and in keeping the park grass mowed down almost to the turf, how many more varieties and much larger numbers of spring and summer birds would gladden the parks of Cleveland.

Few if any of the birds of the Woodpecker family have the intelligence, resourcefulness, and adaptability of the common English Sparrow, who somehow always and everywhere manages easily to find nesting places. If one of the sparrows' favorite nesting places is broken up, they immediately look for and find another close by and go on undisturbed, apparently, adding to the rapidly increasing number of the birds. The Starling, who runs the Sparrow a close second in the matter of family thriftiness, does not seem to have either the intelligence or the nest-building adaptability of the English Sparrow. In Wade Park, at any rate, the Starlings have apparently confined their nests to holes high-up in the large dead and decaying trees, the places, of course, that are particularly dear to Red-headed and other native Woodpeckers. The Flicker, is however, a little more resourceful, it would seem, in the matter of nest-building; and he does not usually select such large, tall, trees, or holes so high above the ground, for the domestic abode of the growing family, as do the Red-head and the Starling. Moreover the Red-head holds his own against the Starling in spite of the greatly superior numbers of the latter, and the same seems to be true of the Flickers, judging by the constantly large number of Flickers that has been observed from year to year, for several seasons now, living in peace and harmony with the Starlings of Wade Park. The writer has more than once seen a Red-head drive an intrusive Starling away from his nesting hole; but he has never personally seen a Starling try to drive a Red-head, Flicker, or any other kind of tree-hole-nesting bird away from his nest.

The tragedy for our park birds, and the continuously diminishing numbers of certain varieties, such as the Blue-bird, which visit our parks now as compared with a few years ago, is by no means only or mainly the result of the rapid increase in the numbers of Starlings and English Sparrows. It is all more largely to be considered one of the inevitable results of the ever increasing and encroaching population of the city. A few years ago there were apple-orchards on the north and east side of Wade Park, with the occasional hollow tree, which some inquisitive Bluebird was sure to find in Spring, and which, along with holes in old-fashioned country gateposts, used to be the favorite nesting places of these beautiful birds. Now the apple orchards have given place to elegant homes, with attractive gardens minus the hollow apple trees, for human habitation. Ten or twelve years and more ago, a Yellow-breasted Chat, the largest, most musical, and most magnificent of our American warblers, might be heard (if not seen; they are such shy birds) by him who had ears every year in the last days of May in the thick copse-like underbrush (as it <u>then</u> was) on the south side of the ravine in Wade Park, jus west of the bridge. One of the same beautiful birds was almost yearly heard and occasionally seen in the large, dense, briar-patch which some fifteen years ago decorated the north-east corner of the old Euclid Golf Course, about where Fairmount Boulevard intersects those elegant Heights residence streets, Tudor Drive and Demington Drive. But for

years now there has been no place in the parks or the immediate vicinity of Cleveland where this wonderful musical colorful and very shy bird could possibly sing or lay an egg.

It is not the Starlings and the English Sparrows that are "denuding" our city parks of the many species of birds which were formerly to be seen on every hand in spring and summer. It is ever encroaching human society and developing modern civilization, assisted especially by the apparent carelessness and ignorance of the otherwise good citizens whose fortune (ill-fortune for birds and bird lovers) it has been for a couple of decades to have responsible charge of the public parks of the City of Cleveland. Unless the futile and destructive practice of cutting down dead and dying trees, clearing out all the briars and underbrush, and mowing down the grass before it seeds, so that it can give neither covert nor feed to many species of birds, ceases, we shall in the course of a very few years, actually have no other birds in the parks to cheer us with their presence and song but the English Sparrows and Starlings (which, by the way, have besides their generally heard screeching calls, a remarkable variety of imitative musical notes in both their spring and winter songs). Only a few days ago a tragic struggle for existence was witnessed in Wade Park between a newly arrived Red-head and a little Downy Woodpecker. The observer's attention was directed to the trees where the altercation was in progress by the loud squeaking, alarm-calls of a bird, which turned out to be a Downy Woodpecker flying hither and yon close by the truncated limb of an elm tree some forty fee above the ground, in which there was evidently a hole where the Downy apparently had his nest. At first, the object of the little bird's alarm and anger could not be seen. Two or three chattering English Sparrows, a quiet Starling or two, a Flicker occasionally "clicking", a proud solitary Grackle, and a contemplative Robin, were sitting on convenient branches not far away from the center of the disturbance, calmly, impassively looking on, as the Downy shrieked and flew viciously at the broken off limb. After a minute or two of this the scarlet crown of a stately Red-headed Woodpecker appeared to the observer from the opposite side of the limb, just a little below the nest-hole. At first the large woodpecker did not seem to take any notice of the almost frantic Downy; only uttering a business-like chirp or cluck now and then, and moving slowly up and down and sideways on the limb in a dignified manner. But after, perhaps, five minutes he became impatient of the noise and fluttering-round of the Downy, and apparently a little irritated, which caused him to dart violently at the Downy once or twice. Then the Red-head retired from the spot and flew to another tree a hundred feet or so distant. Whether the Red-head eventually drove the Downy off from his nest or not it is not yet possible to say. The following morning the struggle was again in progress, though the Downy did not seem to be as much excited as on the previous afternoon. For several days afterwards nothing could be seen of either Downy or Red-head; but about a week later two or three

Red-heads, one of them a female, were quite busy on and around the limb in question; but nothing more has been seen or heard of the Downy.

Several spring migrants which were reported only once or twice in Bulletin No. 1 were seen frequently, and occasionally in Bulletin No. 1 were seen in large numbers during the month of April. This applies particularly to some birds which seem to be winter residents around Cleveland in quite limited numbers; and isolated instances, such as the Goldfinch, (which did not appear in Wade Park before the early part of May), White-throated Sparrow (which were apparently most numerous in the second week of May; a flock of a hundred or more was seen in the "jungle" just west of Fairport by the B.N.C. on May 11), Purple Martin (which was reported as early as March 1), Towhee (one reported on Dec. 7), and Winter Wren (seen as early as March 3). Mr. Delos E. Johnson writes (May 8): "We have had White-throated Sparrows daily in our backyard since their arrival in Cleveland. A Hermit Thrush was also a frequent visitor. Occasionally a Cardinal stops and sings; I saw 4 of them together on my way to school, April 24, Grackles, Robins, Cowbirds, Song Sparrows, Chipping Sparrows, a Downy Woodpecker, Flickers and since April 24, Wrens have been seen almost daily here in Cleveland. White-throated Sparrows have been seen almost frequently on the Adelbert Campus."

Last week a somewhat freakish specimen of Flicker was observed in Wade Park. He was first noticed driving Red-heads away from a broken-off limb of an elm tree some thirty or forty feet above the ground, in which a Downy Woodpecker had located its nest. Then he flew down on the grass where he, with three or four English Sparrows (which in the peculiar light of the late afternoon had decidedly dark blue throats and breasts), busied himself about getting his supper. There he was easily observed from several sides for a few minutes. He was a little shorter than the common Flicker, was gray, of a dark brownish cast on the back, the usually white specks being very dim, the cheeks and most of the belly seemed to be a dark blue, the breast was lighter considerably and was made unusually striking by the perfect black crescent necktie, and a little suggestion of pale yellow below the crescent. No white was noticeable on the back at the beginning of the tail, when it flew up. This Flicker was certainly different (in appearance, thought not in habits) from the common variety. Perhaps the freakish-looking fellow may be accounted for by Chapman's "Remarks" (Handbook, p. 329): "exceptional specimens (i.e. of the Northern Flicker) have a few red feathers in the throat stripes. A male from Louisiana had this mark entirely red and the head grayish brown, while another specimen from Toronto has half the tail orange-red. These unusual markings are supposed to be due to hybridization of our Flicker with the western or Red-shafted Flicker, which resembles the eastern species in pattern of colorization, but has the crown brownish gray or grayish brown, the throat stripes scarlet, the throat and breast gray, the under surface of

wings and tail dull red, and lacks the red nuchal band". Or is the bird seen in Wade Park just a strayed specimen of the "Colaptes auratus auratus (Linn)" which Chapman describes (Handbook, p. 329) as "smaller, darker, black dorsal bars wider than in the following form"?

The writer has never seen such large numbers of Veerys, Olive-backed Thrush, and Bicknell's Thrush in Wade and Rockefeller Parks, as he has observed there since the beginning of May. The Bicknell has been seen several times, clearly distinguished from the Olive-backed and Gray-cheeked by the smaller size and generally lighter color. On one occasion he was even favored by a short but distinct song of a Bicknell's Thrush. "The song," says Brewster, quoted by Chapman (Handbook, p. 495) "is exceedingly like that of the Veery, having the same ringing, flutelike quality; but it is more interrupted, and it ends differently – the next to the last note dropping a half tone, and the final one re-sung abruptly and having a sharp emphasis."

An additional Bartramian Sandpiper was observed by Dean Bailey in Lake View, May 4; several Louisiana Water-Thrushes have been reported since Bulletin No. 1 was issued, also an occasional Purple Finch (April 7, Dean Bailey, Lake View). Many Kingfishers also have been reported by Mrs. Dr. Ruedy (May 6) and others, as well as Cedar Waxwings (15-20, Mrs. Dr. Ruedy, May 16) and Goldfinches.

Professor Herrick is having unusual good fortune in his study of the American Eagle this season, although a severe storm again leveled his "Observatory" near Vermilion with the ground a few weeks ago. Some two weeks since Professor Visscher slipped away in his car for the day to Pts. Pelee Island [sic] and returned home in the evening with two eaglets only a few days old. They were deposited in the greenhouse of the Biological Laboratory and given particular care and feeding for a few days, so that they have grown to be fully twice as large as they were on their arrival. Dr. Herrick is moreover having hitherto undreamed of opportunities to study them at close quarters, take them into his office daily to weigh them and make other previously impossible observations and examinations.

The birds of the Bulletin have been arranged in alphabetical order. It includes all birds that were first reported between April 1st and May 5th, inclusive. Bulletin No. 3 will contain birds observed and reported from May 6th to June 5th inclusive.

60. American Bittern; April 3, Dr. Visscher (1), Mentor Marshes; April 22, Mrs. Dr. Ruedy, Lake Shore BLake Viewd.; same date, D.E. Johnson, Boston Mill (Cuyahoga River Valley, 3-4 miles from Northfield).
61. American Coot; April 3, Dr. Visscher, (4), Mentor Marshes; April 6, Professor Finfrock, same place; April 11, B.N.C., same place.
62. American Wigeon; April 3, Dr. Visscher (5), Mentor Marshes.

63. Baldpate; April 6, Professor Finfrock, Fairport.
64. Baltimore Oriole; May 5, Professor Valentine, highway between Sandusky and Kelley's Island; May 7, Dr. Visscher, Shaker Lakes; May 8, Mrs. Dr. Ruedy, Noble Rd.; May 11, B.N.C. (several), Willoughby, Fairport and Mentor Headlands; May 14, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights; same date, Miss Green, Hessler Rd.; May 15, Wade Park.
65. Barn Swallow; April 23, Dr. Visscher, Shaker Lakes; May 5, Professor Valentine, highway between Sandusky and Kelley's Island; May 7, Dr. Visscher (appr. 25) Shaker Lakes; May 11, B.N.C., Willoughby and Fairport; May 15, 16, 17, etc. (several), Wade Park Pond.
66. Black and White Warbler; May 4, Dean Bailey, Lake View; May 6, Mrs. Dr. Ruedy, Bluestone Road, Cleveland Hts.; May 10, Dr. Visscher, Mr. Gardner's country estates; May 11, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights; same date, B.N.C., Fairport; May 15, (and several times on following days) many seen in Wade and Rockefeller Parks.
67. Black-crowned Night Heron; May 4, Dean Bailey, Lake View; same date, Dr. Visscher, Shaker Lakes; May 7, same observer and place. This interesting species of heron is not frequently observed in the vicinity of Cleveland.
68. Black Tern; May 5, Professor Valentine, highway between Sandusky and Kelley's Island; May 7, Dr. Visscher, Shaker Lakes.
69. Black-throated Blue Warbler; May 1, D.E. Johnson, Boston Mill; May 11, B.N.C., Fairport; same date, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights; May 15, many seen in Rockefeller Park.
70. Black-throated Green Warbler; April 27, Dr. Visscher, Lake View; May 11, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights; same date, B.N.C., Jopling's Woods and Mentor Marshes; May 15, several seen in Rockefeller Park.
71. Blue-winged Teal; April 3, Dr. Visscher (5) Mentor Marshes.
72. Bobolink; May 1, D.E. Johnson, Boston Mill; May 5, Professor Valentine, highway between Sandusky and Kelley's Island; May 7, Dr. Visscher (3) Shaker Lakes; May 6, Mrs. Dr. Ruedy (several) Bluestone Road, Cleveland Hts.; May 11, B.N.C., Willoughby and Hall Country Estate (Kirtland).
73. Bonaparte's Gull; April 3, Dr. Visscher (8), Mentor Headlands (2 with black heads); May 11, B.N.C., Fairport.
74. Brown Thrasher; April 7, one heard singing, County Line Road, near Unionville; same date, Miss Myers, New Philadelphia, and Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights; April 10, Mrs. Dr. Ruedy, Noble Road; April 11, Dr. Visscher,

Lake View; April 21, Professor Finfrock, same place; same date and place, Dean Bailey; April 24, Mrs. Hulme, Rockefeller Park; April 25, D.E. Johnson, Boston Mill; May 4 and 7, Dr. Visscher, Shaker Lakes; May 11, B.N.C., Fairport.

75. Bufflehead; April 5, Dr. Visscher (4), Mentor Marshes; April 6, Professor Finfrock, Fairport; May 5, Rockefeller Park.
76. Canada Goose; April 1, Professor Bourland, Gates Mill; April 15, same observer and place (each time a large flock seen flying).
77. Caspian Tern; Day 5, Professor Valentine, highway between Sandusky and Kelley's Island.
78. Catbird; April 27, Professor Visscher, Oak Road, Cleveland Heights; May 6, Wade Park; same date, Mrs. Dr. Ruedy, Noble Road; May 11, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights; same date, B.N.C., Fairport.
79. Chimney Swift; April 7(?) Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights; April 27, Miss Huntley, Adelbert College Campus; May 11, B.N.C., Fairport; May 12, one heard in Hessler Road.
80. Common Tern; April 6, Professor Finfrock, Mentor Headlands; May 4, Gordon Park, (several); May 5, Professor Visscher, highway between Sandusky and Kelley's Island; May 11, B.N.C. (many), Fairport.
81. Horned Grebe; April 6, Professor Finfrock, Fairport.
82. House Wren; April 7, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights; April 21, Dean Bailey, Lake View; same date, Professor Finfrock, Oak Road, Cleveland Heights; April 27, Dr. Valentine, Lake View; April 28 and May 1, D.E. Johnson (4) Boston Mill; April 29, Wade Park; May 4 and 7, Dr. Valentine, Shaker Lakes; May 11, B.N.C., Fairport.
83. Lesser Scaup Duck; April 3, Dr. Valentine (2), Mentor Marshes; April 6, Professor Finfrock, Fairport.
84. Little Green Heron; April 3, Dr. Valentine, Mentor Marshes; April 23, same observer, Shaker Lakes.
85. Loggerhead Shrike; April 5, Professor Finfrock, Lost Nation Road, (Mentor, O.); April 27, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights.
86. Magnolia Warbler; May 1, D.E. Johnson (4) Boston Mill; May 11, B.N.C., Fairport; May 12, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights; May 15, 16, Wade and Rockefeller Parks (several).
87. Mallard Duck; April 6, Professor Finfrock, Fairport.
88. Marsh Hawk; April 3, Dr. Valentine (6) Mentor Marshes; May 11, B.N.C., Fairport.

89. Maryland Yellow-throat; May 1, D.E. Johnson (2), Boston Mill; May 11, B.N.C., (many), Jopling's Woods and Fairport; May 12, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights.
90. Migrant Shrike; May 1, D.E. Johnson, Boston Mill.
91. Myrtle Warbler; May 5, Professor Visscher, highway between Sandusky and Kelley's Island; May 8, Wade Park; May 9, Mrs. Dr. Ruedy, Noble Road; May 11, B.N.C., Mentor Marshes.
92. Nashville Warbler; April 27, County Line Road, near Unionville; May 4, Dr. Valentine, Shaker Lakes; May 7, same observer and place; May 11, B.N.C., Fairport; May 13, Mrs. Dr. Ruedy, Noble Road.
93. Nighthawk; April 5, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights; May 15 and 16, heard in Hessler Road.
94. Northern Water-thrush; April 28, D.E. Johnson (4), Boston Mill; May 1, same observer and place (10); May 7, Dr. Valentine, Shaker Lakes; May 11, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights; same date; B.N.C., Jopling's Woods.
95. Olive-backed Thrush; April 6, Professor Finfrock, Oak Road, Cleveland Heights; April 21, Dean Bailey, Lake View; May 13, Mrs. Dr. Ruedy, Noble Road; May 11, B.N.C., Fairport; May 15, 16, 17, Wade and Rockefeller Parks (several).
96. Pied-billed Grebe; April 3, Dr. Valentine (2), Mentor Marshes.
97. Pine Siskin; April 21, Professor Finfrock, Lake View; May 5, Miss Huntley, same place (flock feeding in tree-tops with Goldfinches and White-throated Sparrows).
98. Red-breasted Merganser; April 3, Dr. Valentine (5), Mentor Headlands.
99. Red-headed Woodpecker; April 27, Professor Finfrock, Shaker Lakes; May 4, Dr. Valentine, same place; May 6, Wade Park (3-4, and one or more every day for a week since); May 11, B.N.C., Mentor Marshes.
100. Rose-breasted Grosbeak; May 1, D.E. Johnson (2), Boston Mill; May 11, B.N.C., Willoughby; same date, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights.
101. Ruby-crowned Kinglet; April 11, Dr. Valentine, Lake View; April 17, Mrs. Dr. Ruedy, Noble Road; April 21, Dean Bailey, Lake View; same date and place, Professor Finfrock; same date, D.E. Johnson (12) Boston Mill; April 22, same observer, Wade Park; April 28, same observer (4) Boston Mill; May 4 and 7, Dr. Valentine, Shaker Lakes; May 11, B.N.C., Fairport; May 13, Wade Park.
102. Ruddy Duck; April 24, Professor Finfrock, Shaker Lakes.
103. Shoveler; April 8, Professor Finfrock, Fairport.

104. Solitary Sandpiper; May 4, Dr. Valentine, Shaker Lakes; May 19, Professor Bourland, GranDr. Valentineiew Avenue, Cleveland Heights.
105. Spotted Sandpiper; May 4 and 7, Dr. Valentine, Shaker Lakes; May 7, Wade Park (2); May 11, B.N.C. (several), Fairport; May 20, Wade Park.
106. Tree Swallow; April 28, and May 1, D.E. Johnson, Boston Mill.
107. Turkey Vulture; April 3, Dr. Valentine, Mentor Headlands; April 5, Professor Finfrock, Mentor Park; May 11, B.N.C., Fairport.
108. Veery (Wilson's [Thrush]); March 31, Dean Bailey, Lake View; April 7, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights; April 13, Professor Finfrock, Jopling's Woods; April 21, Rockefeller Park; May 11, Mentor Marshes; May 15, 16, 17 (several), Wade and Rockefeller Parks.
109. Virginia Rail; April 3 Dr. Valentine, Mentor Marshes; May 4, same observer, Shaker Lakes.
110. White-crowned Sparrow; April 7, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights; April 21, Professor Finfrock, Oak Road, Cleveland Heights; May 4, Dean Bailey, Lake View; May 11, B.N.C., Mentor Headlands; May 12, Mrs. Dr. Ruedy.
111. Wilson's Snipe; May 4, Dr. Valentine, Shaker Lakes; May 11, B.N.C., Fairport; May 13, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights.
112. Woodcock; April 3, Dr. Valentine, Mentor Marshes; May 11, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights; same date, B.N.C., (3-4), Fairport.
113. Wood Thrush; April 19, Professor Bourland (2), Eaton Road, Cleveland Heights; April 24, Mrs. Hulme, Rockefeller Park; April 6, Francis Gilliland, Sutherland Road, Shaker Heights; same date, Mrs. Dr. Ruedy, Bluestone Road, Cleveland Heights; April 27, Professor Finfrock, Shaker Lakes; May 1, D.E. Johnson, Shaker Lakes; same date, B.N.C. (several) Jopling's Woods.
114. Yellow Warbler; May 1, D.E. Johnson, Boston Mill; May 7, Dr. Valentine, Shaker Lakes; May 11, B.N.C., Jopling's Woods and Fairport; same date, Mrs. Dr. Ruedy, Noble Road.
115. Swamp Sparrow; April 3, Dr. Valentine (6), Mentor Marshes; April 6, Professor Finfrock, Fairport; April 21, Dean Bailey, Lake View; May 11, B.N.C., Fairport.